

Transition from Corrections: Preparation Begins at Intake

Joseph C. Gagnon, Ph.D.
University of Florida
jgagnon@coe.ufl.edu

Arizona's 11th Annual Transition Conference
October 4, 2011

1

Big Picture

- Transition begins at intake
- Guideposts for Success
 - School-Based Preparatory Experiences
 - Career Preparation & Work-Based Experiences
 - Youth Development & Leadership
 - Connecting Activities
 - Family Involvement and Supports

2

Transitions



Big Picture

- The most effective strategy for treating and rehabilitating youth and young adult offenders and preventing recidivism is a comprehensive, community-based model that integrates
 - Prevention programming
 - A continuum of pre-trial and sentencing placement options
 - Sanctions, and aftercare programs

(Zavlek, 2006)

4

Transition Begins at Intake

- Transition is one of the most neglected component of correctional programs (Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2005)
- Transition should begin at the moment of intake and include the immediate transfer of records at intake and at exit (Leone & Cutting, 2004)

5

Preparing for Transition at Intake

- There should be a minimum level of services for all incarcerated youth and young adults to prepare them for exit (Leone & Cutting, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999; American Youth Policy Forum, 2006)



6

Balanced Consideration of Characteristics

- Consideration of youth and young adult characteristics is critical to developing effective policies, programs, and service systems (Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005)
- Consideration of the following are key to creating a coordinated system that operates in both the best interest of the incarcerated person and the community
 - Community protection,
 - Offender accountability, and
 - Competency development (Harp, 2002)

7

Characteristics

- The information I present focuses primarily on adolescents and young adults through the age of 22 (The maximum age for receiving mandatory access to educational services, as per IDEIA, 2006)

8

Guideposts for Success

- School-Based Preparatory Experiences
- Career Preparation & Work-Based Experiences
- Youth Development & Leadership
- Connecting Activities
- Family Involvement and Supports

9

School-Based Preparatory Experiences

Examples Discussed in Session 2

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Specific Needs:

- Highly qualified teachers
- Transferable credits
- Collaboration among professionals across disciplines

Discussed at Length

- Curriculum aligned with state and local standards
- Behavioral and mental health supports

10

Characteristics

- In juvenile corrections, 38.15% of students are in special education compared to 12% in public school (Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009; Stizok, Pitsenberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orloffsky, 2007)



11

Characteristics

- Students with EBD and LD comprise an overwhelming majority of the students with disabilities (Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009)
- Youth and young adults with disabilities are more likely to be placed in segregation or disciplinary confinement for behavioral violations than non-disabled youth (Leone et al., 1995)

12

Characteristics

- Youth and young adults in JC schools may have few academic credits and low grade point averages (Major, Chester, McEntire, Waldo, & Blomberg, 2002)
- Youth and young adults rarely return to high school, stay in school, and earn a diploma upon exit from a JC school (Griller-Clark, Rutherford, & Quinn, 2004; Haberman & Quinn, 1986; LeBlanc & Plannenstiel, 1991; Todis, Bullis, Waintrup, Schultz, & D'Ambrosio, 2001; Webb & Maddox, 1986).

13

Characteristics

- In 2003, only 43% of adult prison inmates had a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate when they began their current incarceration
- Helping inmates complete their high school education is a major aim of many prison academic programs

(Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner, 2007)

14

Characteristics

- Youth and young adults without a high school diploma are more likely to live in poverty and only work part-time (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001; U.S. Department of Labor, 2003)
- Academic improvement is associated with lower rates of recidivism (Lexcen & Redding, 2000)



15

Curriculum

- Appropriate educational services for incarcerated youth and young adults are an important element of successful transition into society (Foley, 2001; Nelson, Leone, & Rutherford, 2004)
- No Child Left Behind Act (2002):
 - Provide all youth and young adults with a "fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education" (Sec. 101)

16

Curriculum

- Students with disabilities are guaranteed educational services until age 22.
- IDEA (2004) requires that services be designed and delivered to provide **access to and progress in the general education curriculum** (Cortiella, 2006)
- The assumption:
 - Providing all students with access to the general education curriculum will prepare students for life after exiting school (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004)

17

Curriculum

- Access to the general education curriculum may run counter to IDEA regulations that call for individualized educational experiences for youth and young adults with disabilities (Hardman & Dawson, 2008)
- IDEA
 - to ensure that all youth and young adults "with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services **designed to meet their unique needs** and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living" (2004, P. L. 108-446 Sec. 682 (d)(1)(A))

18

Curriculum

- Preparations for future success and integration into society and access to the general education curriculum are not necessarily mutually exclusive



19

Curriculum

- Many experts consider that education for youth in JC schools should include access to the general education curriculum, as well as
 - Pre-vocational and vocational training,
 - Paid work experience, and
 - General Educational Development (GED) test preparation

(Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Glasser, 2006; Lane & Carter, 2006; Nelson et al., 2004; Rutherford, Quinn, Leone, Garfinkel, & Nelson, 2002)

20

Curriculum

- A lack of oversight has led to a situation in which JC schools have one of the worst records of adhering to federal special education requirements
- Vocational courses and GED preparation should supplement and not supplant high school coursework in most situations (Browne, 2003; Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Leone, 1994)

21

Can we Justify GED Preparation?

- GED Preparation in addition to the general education curriculum
 - As an elective
 - As a course of study for a youth/adult who is beyond the age of drop-out
- Youth completing either vocational training or a GED program while confined are twice as likely to be employed six months after release (Black et al., 1996)

22

Characteristics: Mental Health

- Placement in juvenile corrections is viewed as a way of providing mental health services that may be otherwise unavailable (National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2003)
- 1/3 to 2/3 of juvenile detention facilities hold youth with mental health needs without charges, but because they were awaiting a mental health placement (The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, 1999; United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform-Minority Staff Special Investigation Division, 2004)

23

Characteristics

- 40-50% of youth and young adults with ED were neglected, physically/sexually/emotionally abused (Mattison, Spitznagel, & Felix, 1998; Oseroff, Oseroff, Westling, & Gessner, 1999)
- Of confined youth and young adults, about 1/2 of males and almost 1/2 of females have a substance use disorder (Teplin et al., 2002)

24

Characteristics

- 11% of detained youth and young adults have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Abram et al., 2004)
- In JC, more than 90% of youth and young adults experienced a traumatic event (i.e., witnessed someone hurt very badly or killed) (Teplin et al., 2002)
- Excluding conduct disorder, nearly 2/3 of males and 3/4 of females had one or more psychiatric disorders (Teplin et al., 2002)

25

Characteristics

- Of facilities who detained youth and young adults awaiting mental health services, 48% reported that there were suicide attempts among those youth (United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform-Minority Staff, Special Investigation Division, 2004)



26

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- A common feature of effective behavioral and mental health interventions for youth in secure care is a therapeutic orientation of treatment (Greenwood & Turner, 2009)
- However, only about 15–30% of detained youth and young adults meeting criteria for a mental disorder receive treatment while in detention (Teplin et al., 2006)
- Those served in commitment facilities fare only slightly better (Kurtz, Thornes, & Bailey, 1998)

27

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- Cognitive behavior training (CBT) has demonstrated effectiveness for improving outcomes and reducing recidivism when implemented in secure settings (Greenwood, 2008; Lipsey, 2009; Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002)
- CBT uses a skill-building approach to teach adaptive reasoning and responding during situations that provoke negative feelings and reactionary behavior (Lipsey, Chapman, & Landenberger, 2001)

28

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- CBT may be also used to ameliorate and/or correct criminogenic patterns of thinking and behavior (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005).
- Although the foci of CBT may vary, typical components of CBT include
 - Instruction on solving interpersonal problems,
 - Developing personal responsibility, and
 - Honing life skills and goals (Lipsey et al., 2001)

29

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- Research supports the value of CBT-based programs for improving the behavioral and mental health outcomes of juvenile offenders (Guerra & Slaby, 1990; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Latessa, 2006; Lipsey, 2009; Pealer & Latessa, 2004; Rhode, Jorgesen, Seely, & Mace, 2004)
- Results of CBT have also shown promise for reducing the symptoms associated with PTSD in incarcerated juveniles (McMackin, Leisen, Sattler, Krinsley, & Riggs, 2002; Ovaert, Cashel, & Sewell, 2003)

30

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- CBT treatment was most beneficial for youth with trauma related to gang and community violence (Ovaert, Cashel, & Sewell, 2003)
- Similarly, the effects of CBT for abused youth in secure care are encouraging (Arnold et al., 2003)

31

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- The aforementioned approaches should be combined with other promising practices, including individual and group counseling (Guerra, Kim, & Boxer, 2008)



32

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) will be described in session 2 as a promising behavioral approach in corrections.

33

Career Preparation & Work-Based Experiences

Examples Discussed in Session 2

North Carolina Program
RIO-Y Project

Specific Needs:

- Comprehensive vocational programming
- Collaboration among education, corrections, community organizations, employers
- Development of career pathways
- Instruction in work-related skills
- Work-based experiences

34

Vocational Education vs. Pre-Vocational Education

- Vocational skills are the actual skills needed to perform job tasks
- Pre-vocational skills assist students with getting and keeping a job
 - Interviewing skills
 - Resume writing
 - Solving problems with co-workers

35

Vocational Education

- The following are associated with higher postschool earnings and lower drop-out rates for youth with emotional disturbance:
 - Generic and occupationally specific career education
 - Technical education
 - On-the-job-training (Corbett et al., 2002)

36

Vocational Education

- Even when vocational programs do exist, youth and young adults with disabilities are often excluded because they do not have a high school diploma or adequate reading and other prerequisite skills (Rutherford et al., 1985)

37

Vocational Education

- While 56% of state prisons and 94% of federal prisons offer vocational training, only 10% of inmates participated in a vocational education program (Greenberg, Dunleavy, & Kutner, 2007; Harlow, 2003)

38

Vocational Education

- Simply allowing youth and young adults to do facility maintenance or serve food cannot be considered vocational education
- Vocational education requires a specific curriculum that aligns with state requirements and has a clear scope and sequence

39

Youth Development & Leadership

Examples Discussed in Session 2
Project Parole SUPPORT

Specific Needs

- Highly individualized transition plan with youth input
- Transition support that recognizes unique needs of youth in corrections
- Instruction on laws, rights, consequences throughout JJ process
- Education on risk-taking behaviors/consequences
- Self-empowerment activities
- Mentoring opportunities

40

Connecting Activities

Examples Discussed in Session 2

Comprehensive transition policies in state law (VA)

Yellow Ribbon Campaign

Specific Needs:

- Collaboration among families, mental health service providers, educators, youth development professionals, probation officers
 - Clear delineation of roles
 - On-going communication
- Systemic responses to transitioning youth
- Assistance in addressing sensitive issues

41

Collaboration

- "No single governmental agency, state entity, local organization, program, or project can do this hard work alone" (i.e., promote reintegration in to community, school/training, workforce)

(Gagnon & Richards, 2008)

42

Professional Development

- Cross-discipline professional development (e.g., judges, youth advocates, attorneys, correctional officers) must be provided for professionals to have a common understanding of **when and how to use specific interventions and programs** (Caldwell, Vitacco, & Van Rybroek, 2006; Gagnon & Richards, 2008; National Council on Disability, 2003).
- Oversight is necessary to ensure that professionals are **held accountable** for the appropriate use and implementation of programs and interventions (National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice, 2007)

43

Professional Development

- Teachers often do not have the requisite skills to effectively assist detained and committed students academically and behaviorally (Houchins, Puckett-Patterson, Crosby, Shippen, & Jolivet, 2009)
- Principals in JC often do not have adequate knowledge of IDEIA and NCLB requirements (Gagnon, Haydon, & Maccini, 2010; Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009)

44

Professional Development

- Less than 2/3 of JC personnel (e.g., care workers, counselors, probation officers), have had training about students with disabilities (Kvarfordt, Purcell, & Shannon, 2005)



45

Professional Development

- Professional development material is available to JC personnel for purchase or at no cost.
- The *Learning Port National Professional Development Library* (<http://www.LearningPort.us>)
- Learning Port serves as an online conduit of PD state agency materials, videos and resources developed by national organizations, and online modules and toolkits

46

Professional Development

- Topics are applicable in a variety of settings including professional learning communities and accountability, and resources that specifically target JC.
- The format, duration, cost, level of access (public, registration), assessment components, and the year it was created are indicated along with contact information and direct links for accessing

47

Family Supports & Involvement

Specific Needs

- Well-informed parent involvement is critical at all stages of juvenile justice process
 - Advocacy
 - Information-sharing
 - Prevention and rehabilitation
- Supports for parents

Examples of Post-Release Programs (Session 2)

Multisystemic Therapy
Family-focused mental health treatment

48

Family Supports

- “Parents are a vital component of any plan to positively affect youth trajectory toward independence and self-sufficiency” (Gagnon & Richards, 2008, p. 17)
- In fact, relationships between schools and families predict academic and mental health outcomes for students (Hoagwood et al., 2007)
- Parent resource: PACER Center (www.pacer.org)

49

Discussion and Questions

- Guideposts for Success
 - School-Based Preparatory Experiences
 - Career Preparation & Work-Based Experiences
 - Youth Development & Leadership
 - Connecting Activities
 - Family Involvement and Supports

50